



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

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Town of Needham Names Anne Nydam as Town's First Poet Laureate

Needham, MA - Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Library Director Rob MacLean have announced the appointment of Needham resident Anne Nydam as the Town's first Poet Laureate. This one-year volunteer position is intended to amplify the literary voice of the community and celebrate the power of poetry to inspire, reflect, and connect us all. Nydam will be introduced at the December 3rd Select Board meeting.

"I have loved reading and writing poetry for as long as I can remember," said Nydam, a Needham resident since 1999. As a child, Nydam won poetry contests in Cricket magazine and enrolled in a juried poetry class while earning her Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics at Yale University. The experience prompted her to volunteer to teach poetry workshops in local schools while at Yale. As an adult, Nydam has published poems in several publications and has served as President of the Board and lead organizer of Needham Open Studios. In addition, she has presented workshops, lectures and readings and served as a panelist on topics related to art, writing and linguistics at North Hill in Needham as well as taught creative writing workshops for several years at Eliot Elementary, Hillside Elementary and High Rock School in Needham.

As the Town's poet laureate, Nydam will engage in a variety of activities aimed at making poetry accessible and meaningful to all residents of Needham and to encourage the reading and writing of poetry by creating programs and holding events, such as workshops for writers, poetry slams, readings and similar events, throughout town and in the schools.

"I'm really excited that Needham is seeking to bring more poetry into the life of our town and I am honored to serve as the town's first poet laureate," said Nydam. "I have a passionate love of words and their power to touch our hearts in magical ways, and an enthusiasm to share that love."

“The intent of the Poet Laureate program is not only promote public awareness of poetry but to enhance the cultural identity of our town and to celebrate its unique history, traditions and values through poetry,” said Fitzpatrick, who initiated the idea of a poet laureate program for the Town. Fitzpatrick submitted a grant application to the Needham Council for Arts and Culture which fully funded the \$500 stipend for the new program.

The Poet Laureate Program will be administered by staff at the Needham Free Public Library in cooperation with the Office of the Town Manager. In her new role, Nydam will be involved with two events at the Needham Free Public Library on Wednesday, December 4th. The first, “Cup and Chaucer”, a monthly poetry discussion group for adults and teens, will be held in the Library’s Community Room from 12:30-1:30 pm featuring Nydam as a special guest who will help lead the discussion. The second event, “Found and Blackout Poetry”, is program for teens and adults which will be held from 3:00-4:00 pm also in the Community Room. Teens and adults ages 12 and up are invited to join Nydam and Young Adult Librarian Erin Bassett for a craft and chat program which will utilize old books and magazines to create different types of poetry.

“Anne’s passion for poetry as well as her volunteer and professional experience will be a great asset to this new position,” said MacLean. “We’re looking forward to working with her to expand the library’s programming in this area.”

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